THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (e) The working days in the Supreme Court and High Courts are regulated by the rules framed by the respective Courts. According to available information, the Supreme Court of India works for 222 days in a year, all High Courts in the country normally have 210 working days in a year and the number of working days of the District/Subordinate Courts are regulated by the concerned High Court.

The Department of Justice in July, 2001 had invited the views of the High Courts regarding the number of working days in the High Courts and the curtailment of their vacations. Replies were received from 14 High Courts. The High Court of Uttaranchal (now Uttarakhand) increased the number of its working days in a year from 210 to 224 and the High Court of Karnataka from 210 to 214. Jharkhand High Court had no objection to increasing the number of working days. Other High Courts had not favoured increase in the number of their working days.

In the year 2002-03, this Department had examined the matter of enhancing the number of working days in Courts. In order to reduce the huge pendencies prevailing in the High Courts, this Department addressed to all the High Courts, requesting them to fix the period of vacations in such a way that the number of working days of High Courts generally do not fall below 222 days in a year.

Judicial system at grassroot level

2854. DR. ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether, while welcoming the decision of Government to appoint first class magistrates in about 6000 mobile courts, being set up to establish a quick and efficient system of judiciary at grassroot level, Government would simultaneously consider creating a free legal cell at district level, which would provide legal aid to rural litigants, either free of cost or at nominal cost; and

(b) whether the system of plea-bargaining would be realistically explained to the rural litigants, so that unnecessary delay and legal expenditure is reduced significantly?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) and (b) Setting up of Gram Nyayalayas with mobility in the rural areas would bring to the people of rural areas speedy, affordable and substantial justice. In order to make system of participatory justice a reality, legal aid, mechanism of conciliation and plea bargaining at the grassroots would be a part of Gram Nyayalayas.

Procedure for appointment of Judges

2855. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether performance of the in-house collegium system of selecting High Court Judges has stood the test of functional efficiency;

(b) if so, why there are 26 per cent unfilled vacancies, contributing significantly towards piling up of cases;